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RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 1899  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1874  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1915  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1924  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1568  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1813  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1763  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1584  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 1855  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DUSHANBE 002153

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SUBJECT: VISIT TO TAJIK BORDER GUARD TRAINING CENTER

CLASSIFIED BY: Tracey Jacobson, Ambassador, U.S. Embassy  
Dushanbe, STATE.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (SBU) Summary: A Russian-run training facility for Tajik troops has some modern conveniences, but the training program relies on Soviet educational methods to teach under-educated Border Guards the basics. PolOff and Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC) representative visited the Leninsky Training Center in Dushanbe November 20 to see where the Russian military trains the Tajik border guards. Posters of President Rahmonov and Border Guards head General Zuhurov decorated the facility, as well as propaganda pictures and monuments commemorating Soviet World War II battle victories. New recruits marched and drilled, and the classrooms had chairs that Tajik children would have a hard time fitting into. This Soviet-style facility provides acceptable living conditions with working heat and electricity, but the fact that new recruits fire only nine shots over a 40-day training period suggests larger funding shortages and a weak curriculum. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) The Leninsky facility trains approximately 2000 new Border Guards each year, a spring and a fall class of 1000 soldiers each. Basic training is also conducted in other Tajik provinces. The entire fall class appeared to be in their late teens. During the visit, they marched in formation, exercised, and listened to lectures in the classroom. Approximately 250 Russian and Tajik enlisted soldiers and officers staff the base. Tajik officers taught all of the classes we observed in the Tajik language. According the staff, Tajik officers taught most of the basic courses, while Russian officers developed the curriculum and advised as necessary. The new recruits wore new-looking military uniforms; ODC rep advised some of them were U.S.-issued. Each soldier has a two-year service commitment.

¶3. (SBU) The training cycle for a new recruit lasts approximately 40 days, during which soldiers are taught basic military discipline. Although shooting is an important part of their work, the base commander reported that each recruit fires a total of nine shots during the 40-day training cycle. After

graduation from this course, recruits are directed to a border detachment for additional training, before deployment to a Tajik border post. There is a separate six-month training course for warrant officers.

14. (SBU) Course instructors utilized Soviet-style practices, with Tajik officers delivering lectures to the new recruits. In one classroom, an officer described the various parts of a disassembled weapon to the class. After the lecture, he held up one particular part of the weapon, and instructed them to repeat the name of that particular part. Some classrooms contained chairs, and in others soldiers sat on desks. Those classrooms which were fully furnished included chairs more suitable for children at a grade school.

15. (SBU) Officers and recruits had access to a variety of recreational options, including a well-kept soccer field, a church and a mosque. Pictures of General Zuhurov, Chairman of the State Committee for Border Protection, and President Rahmonov decorated the base, along with military propaganda pictures commemorating Soviet World War II battle victories. A war museum contained additional Soviet military propaganda posters and a wall honoring the 54 Tajiks who received the "Hero of the Soviet Union" award during World War II. At the base's medical clinic, technicians regularly conduct HIV and TB screening for all incoming recruits. When queried, one medical specialist stated that they never found a positive case of either disease. The sleeping quarters were adequate, with heat and electricity, and pillows and blankets for all soldiers. The base also had a library, which featured Tajik and Russian books; the newsroom offered Russian newspapers dating from 1991 to 2005.

16. (C) Comment: The visit caused some initial confusion, since the post commander had not been notified. Although the visit

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had been approved by General Zuhurov himself, and Russian Colonel Yuri Davedyan, approval failed to trickle down the chain of command. The fact that new recruits only fire nine bullets over a 40-day period demonstrates an alarming lack of preparedness for actual combat. The base commander stated that they receive further training following deployment to their border posts, but given the conditions at recently visited posts (reftels), it seems unlikely that more range practice awaited. Post was pleased to see that CENTCOM-issued military clothing is starting to be distributed to Tajik border guards. END COMMENT. JACOBSON